

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RABAT 05479 090911Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR MO

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS COUNTRY ASSESSMENT FOR MOROCCO

REF: STATE 240552

1. OUR COMMENTS ON AND A SUGGESTED REVISION OF COUNTRY ASSESSMENT (REFTEL) FOLLOW.

2. COMMENTS:

(A) PARA 2 OF REFTTEL: MOROCCAN LAW WAS NOT MADE SEVERE UNTIL THE REVISION OF JUNE, 1974, AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY AGAINST TOURISTS HAS NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY STRICKT. FIGURES REFERRED TO--4,000 FARMERS AND 95 PERCENT OF PRODUCTION--ARE DIFFICULT TO DOCUMENT. WE FURTHER BELIEVE THAT INCREASED CONSUMPTION BY MOROCCANS IS AGGREGATE RATHER THAN PER CAPITA.

(B) PARA 3 OF REFTTEL: THE INTERNAL ENFORCEMENT PROBLEM OWES MUCH TO THE HISTORICAL, FAIRLY WELL CIRCUMSCRIBED ROLE OF KIF IN THE SOCIETY AND THE LACK OF CONVICTION THAT KIF IS LIKELY TO BREAK OUT OF THAT ROLE IN A DANGEROUS MANNER.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 RABAT 05479 090911Z

(C) PARA 4 OF REFTTEL: IF FACED WITH A NARCOTICS (HARD

DRUGS) PROBLEM, THE GOM WOULD BE QUITE LIKELY TO LAUNCH A VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN. THE GOM IS ALREADY BECOMING MORE AWARE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECT OF THE DRUG PROBLEM. IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER AMPHETAMINE AND SIMILAR DRUGS ARE READILY AVAILABLE WITHOUT PRESCRIPTION. PRESCRIPTIONS ARE LEGALLY REQUIRED AND WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THE LAW IS CURRENTLY BEING FLOUTED TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE. WE ALSO ARE UNAWARE OF ANY IMPORTANT TRADE OR SEIZURES OF SUCH DRUGS.

3. WE PROPOSE FOLLOWING REVISED COUNTRY ASSESSMENT.
BEGIN TEXT: SIGNIFICANCE: HARD DRUGS HAVE NOT YET BECOME A PROBLEM IN MOROCCO; TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT SEIZURES NOR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE CULTIVATION. MOROCCO IS A POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT TRANSIT POINT, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF ITS LONG COASTLINES-- BOTH ON THE ATLANTIC AND THE MEDITERRANEAN--AND BECAUSE OF ESTABLISHED SMUGGLING ROUTES FOR TOBACCO AND HASHISH. IF TRADITIONAL NARCOTICS SMUGGLING ROUTES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE ARE DISRUPTED, THE SIMPLEST REROUTING OF THE ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFIC WOULD BE FROM THE NORTHERN TO THE SOUTHERN SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, IN WHICH CASE MOROCCO COULD BECOME A MAJOR FOCAL POINT. PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION, AND TRAFFICKING IN SOFT DRUGS, SUCH AS HASHISH AND KIF, HAVE BEEN INCREASING IN RECENT YEARS. RABAT ISSUED A NEW LAW EARLIER THIS YEAR RAISING FROM MISDEMEANORS TO FELONIES ALL DRUG-RELATED OFFENSES. THOUGH THE LAW DOES NOT APPEAR TO REPRESENT ANY REAL CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S AMBIVALENT POLICY ON THE USE OF DRUGS BY MOROCCAN CITIZENS, IT DOES PROVIDE A STRONGER ENFORCEMENT TOOL FOR USE AGAINST TOURISTS AND LARGE-SCALE INTERNATIONAL SMUGGLERS. THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT DISCOURAGES THE MOVEMENT OF DRUGS INTO THE URBAN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. ONLY A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF MOROCCAN FARMERS, PRIMARILY IN THE RIF MOUNTAIN AREA, ARE ACTUALLY INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF HASHISH AND KIF. THE BULK OF THIS OUTPUT APPARENTLY GOES TO EUROPE VIA BOTH THE SOUTHERN FRENCH COAST AND THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR. SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF MOROCCAN HASHISH HAVE ALSO BEEN SEIZED IN U.S. AND NEIGHBORING PORTS DURING THE PAST YEAR. TOTAL CONSUMPTION OF DRUGS

SECRET

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PAGE 03 RABAT 05479 090911Z

BY THE MOROCCANS THEMSELVES IS INCREASING, BUT IS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY LIMITED TO KIF AND ITS BYPRODUCTS.

4. PROBLEM: THE MAIN PROBLEM IN NARCOTICS CONTROL IS THE TOLERANT ATTITUDE ENGENDERED BY THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF KIF WITHIN THE SOCIETY. SOME MOROCCAN OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL EFFORT, APPARENTLY PERCEIVE THE NEED TO TAKE A STRONGER

STAND AGAINST THE LOCAL DRUG PROBLEM. ALTHOUGH THIS BROADER CONSCIOUSNESS IS DEVELOPING AMONG BETTER-EDUCATED MEMBERS OF THE HIGHER BUREAUCRATIC LEVELS, IT HAS NOT YET PERCOLATED DOWN TO THE LINE ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A SERIOUS PROBLEM COULD DEVELOP HERE. AS A RESULT, THERE CONTINUES TO EXIST A MODUS VIVENDI BETWEEN THE LOCAL POLICE AND THE GROWER. THERE IS ALSO A FEELING AMONG SOME FOREIGN OBSERVERS THAT THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT SEES NOTHING TO BE GAINED FROM ATTACKING THE PROBLEM AT ITS SOURCE IN THE ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AND POLITICALLY SENSITIVE RIF REGION.

5. ASSESSMENT: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GOM'S OUTLOOK AND ITS PARTICULAR NEEDS, IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT MOROCCO WILL LAUNCH A VIGOROUS INTERNAL KIF CONTROL EFFORT UNTIL IT PERCEIVES A THREAT TO ITS EDUCATED YOUTH. THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG PROBLEM AND ITS EFFECT ON THE NATIONAL IMAGE. THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLIGENCE, ESPECIALLY ON THE CLANDESTINE HASHISH EXPORT ROUTES, AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF AN EDUCATION PROGRAM SPELLING OUT THE DANGERS AND COST OF DRUG ABUSE MAY HELP PROMOTE A GROWING AWARENESS OF THE POTENTIAL PROBLEM FACED BY MOROCCO.

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